

BRIAN HIGGINS
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

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March 1, 2023

Alan Shaw
President & CEO
Norfolk Southern Corp.
650 W. Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Dear Mr. Shaw:

I write to call your attention to an alarming situation in my district regarding a Norfolk Southern train emitting flames while traveling through a residential neighborhood in Buffalo, New York, and express outrage at Norfolk Southern's initial response. I demand a thorough investigation and response to this serious inquiry as soon as possible for the safety of my community.

Two individuals saw flames coming from the top of an eastbound Norfolk Southern train car on the Beltline railroad in Buffalo on February 13, 2023. The incident was also captured on video. Reports in the Buffalo News detail a completely inadequate response by Norfolk Southern. An emergency dispatch recording reveals that a Norfolk Southern representative suggested the flames were sparks instead. The formal response issued by Norfolk Southern was one sentence: "We have no reports of a car on fire."¹

This is a gross abdication of Norfolk Southern's responsibilities as a freight rail operator that shows horrifying disregard for potential consequences in our communities. The recent incident in East Palestine, Ohio, provides a nightmarish illustration of what may occur as the result of a rail disaster. To think that my community could suffer a similar catastrophe is unimaginable. While Norfolk Southern has several public phone numbers available on its website, including one specifically for emergencies, these are useless if the complaints received are not responded to in a serious manner. The lack of due diligence on Norfolk Southern's part is offensive at best and highly dangerous at worst. I demand a full investigation and explanation into the train emitting flames that passed through Buffalo, NY on February 13.

Thank you for your attention to this most important issue and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress

¹ Sommer, Mark. "Residents say flames were shooting from Norfolk Southern train going through Buffalo," *The Buffalo News*, February 21, 2023, https://buffalonews.com/news/local/residents-say-flames-were-shooting-from-norfolk-southern-train-going-through-buffalo/article_dc21188e-ad96-11ed-b184-2b0d6fab3e1b.html